

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

FOR EAGLEBURGER: NOTE FINAL PARAGRAPH

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 17 HEADED "AFTER LEBANON."

2. CROSSING ONE'S FINGERS TIGHTLY, ONE CAN NOW SAY THAT THE
END OF THE 17-MONTH WAR IN LEBANON IS WITHIN SIGHT. THE
MORE SAVAGE RIGHT-WING CHRISTIANS MAY WISH TO GET IN A FEW
LAST LICKS, WHICH WILL MAINLY FALL ON CIVILIANS; AND THE
MORE FANATICAL PALESTINIANS, RATHER THAN CUTTING THEIR
IMMENSE LOSSES, MAY WISH TO ACCUMULATE MORE. IT SEEMS
LIKELY NONETHELESS THAT THE FATIGUE AND BETTER JUDGEMENT OF
THE PARTIES, REINFORCED BY OUTSIDE PRESSURE, ESPECIALLY
SYRIA'S (AND EVEN RUSSIA'S), IS PRODUCING A RAGGED CEASE-
FIR ON THE PHSICAL LINES THAT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR
SOME MONTHS. IT SHOULD TAKE EFFEC IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
SEATING OF THE NEW PRESIDENT, ELIAS SARKAS, NEXT WEEK.

3. LEBANON, OF COURSE, IS GONE. THE DEBRIS AMOUNTS TO DE
FACTO PARTITION AMONG MOSLEMS, CHRISTIANS AND, FOR THE TIME
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BEING, SYRIANS. WHETHER THERE WILL EVER AGAIN BE A LEBANON,

A UNITARY STATE WITH A SINGLE SET OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, IS PRONLEMATICAL, THE COUNTRY'S ONEC FLOURISHING COSMOPOLITAN ECONOMY IS DESTROYED OR DISPERSED. A PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION EQUIVALENT TO ABOUT TWO MILLION AMERICANS IS DEAD.

4. THE TRAGEDY IS PECULIARLY LEBANON'S YET IT HAS BROAD IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WHOLE MIDDLE EAST. THE FACT AND SPECTACLE OF ARABS KILLING ARABS IN LEBANON HAS TENDED TO DISTRACT THE ARAB WORLD FROM ITS MORE NORMAL PRIMARY FOCUS ON ISRAEL. ISRAEL HAS USED THE INTERLUDE TO OPEN ITS BORDER FOR PEACEFUL CONTACTS WITH THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN LEBANON--A FIRST. LAST WEDNESDAY, THROUGH INDIRECT NEGOTIATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS, A GAP IN THE ISRAELI-SYRIAN GOLAN LINE WAS OPENED TO PERMIT VISITS AMONG DRUZE FAMILIES--ANOTHER FIRST. TO ISRAEL'S SATISFACTION, JORDAN'S KING HUSSEIN HAS EXPLOITED THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION'S MISFORTUNES IN LEBANON TO STRENGTHEN HIS LINKS WITH THE NEW SUPPOSEDLY "RADICAL" AND PRO-PLO LEADERSHIP IN THE WEST BANK. THE SINAI DISENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT HAS BOTH SIDES PURRING.

5. IN BRIEF, THE THREAT OF ARAB-ISRAELI WAR HAS NOT APPEARED MORE REMOTE IN YEARS. ALL FOUR CONTIGUOUS ARAB STATES ARE IN THE MOST PEACEFUL AND OPEN RELATIONSHIP TO ISRAEL THAT THEY HAVE EVER KNOWN. A KIND OF STEP-BY-STEP EVOLUTION IN POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS, THE FIRMER FOR BEING ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS, THE FIRMER FOR BEING MOSTLY THE REGION'S OWN DOING, HAS BEEN IN TRAIN.

6. UNQUESTIONABLY, THE TEMPTATION IS STRONG, AND NOT JUST ON THE ISRAELI SIDE, TO STAND PAT. ISRAELIS LEAN THAT WAY BECAUSE OF THE EVIDENT SHORT-RANGE CONVENIENCE AND BECAUSE IT FITS THEIR PET THEORY THAT PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY AS TRUST IS BUILT BY CONTACT AND COEXISTENCE OVER TIME. THIS IS WELL KNOWN. BUT ON THEIR PART, SOME ARABS, EVEN WHILE PROFESSING IMPATIENCE WITH THE STATUS QUO, SEEM RELUCTANT TO ENTER A FURTHER STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS. THEY KNOW, OR THEY OUGHT TO KNOW, THAT TO RECEIVE MORE TERRITORY THEY WILL HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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TO GIVE ISRAEL REAL POLITICAL COIN, NOT SIMPLY A PIECE OF PAPER THEY CALL A PEACE TREATY. THAT THE PLO HAS LOST SO MUCH OF ITS POLITICAL CLOUT IN THE ARAB WORLD WILL MAKE IT THAT MUCH EASIER FOR SO-MINDED ARABS JUST TO GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS IN THIS REGARD.

7. WE BELIEVE STRONGLY, NONETHELESS, THAT IT WOULD BE THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY TO STAND STILL. SYRIA WILL HAVE CUT THE PLO

DOWN TO SIZE IN LEBANON IN VAIN IF IT DOES NOT NOW, AFTER THE AMERICAN ELECTIONS, MOVE ON IN THE EGYPTIAN FASHION TOWARD A SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. EGYPT, HAVING ABSORBED THE SINAI AGREEMENT ON PARTIAL DISENGAGEMENT, HAS GOOD REASON TO GO THE REST OF THE WAY. JORDAN, TOO, IS NOT LIKELY TO GET INTO A BETTER BARGAINING POSITION. THE PALESTINIANS, HOWEVER THEY MANAGE NOW TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES, SURLEY HAVE LEARNED THAT THE ONE REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE AVAILABLE TO THEM IS A WEST BANK-GAZA STATE ACCEPTING, UNDER NEGOTIATED TERMS, JORDAN AND ISRAEL ALIKE. THE ISRAELIS, SO QUICK TO INSIST THEY WILL NOT NEGOTIATE UNDER PRESSURE, HAVE NO LEGITIMATE EXCUSE FOR REFRAINING FROM SERIOUS NEGOTIATION NOW THAT THEY ARE NOT UNDER PRESSURE. SERIOUS NEGOTIATION MEANS, IN THIS CONTEXT, THE RETURN OF ARAB LAND CAPTURED IN 1967 AND COMING TO MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TERMS WITH THE PALESTINIANS. IN RETURN, THE ISRAELIS HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO DEMAND, WITH STRONG AMERICAN BACKING, A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT ON TERMS THAT GUARANTEE THEM GENUINE SECURITY.

8. ONE OF THE SUBSTANTIAL DIPLOMATIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN TO ESTABLISH UNITED STATES AS A GENERALLY TRUSTED AND EFFECTIVE MEDIATOR OF BOTH ARAB AND ISRAELI INTERESTS. THE PRESIDENT SWORN IN NEXT JANUARY, NO MATTER WHO HE IS, WILL HAVE AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD ON THIS FOUNDATION AND TO COAX EQUIVALENT CONCESSIONS OUT OF BOTH SIDES, FOR THEIR GOOD AND FOR THE UNITED STATES' GOOD, AS WELL. (END TEXT.)
ROBINSON.

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